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ABSTRACT

Drawing from interviews conducted with students and staff at six community colleges in New York, this report offers a profile of college programs for learning disabled students and their clientele. Part I presents the results of interviews conducted with 28 learning disabled students, focusing on general demographics, students' reasons for enrolling, main needs, and the resources they found most useful. Part II contains a profile of learning disabled programs in terms of major objectives, funding sources, the relative importance of particular functions, program evaluation strategies, and most valued resources. After part III outlines the characteristics of successful program participants, part IV presents a model showing the range of program components that can be incorporated to address the needs of learning disabled students. This section includes background information and definitions related to the learning characteristics and needs of these students, identifies appropriate assessment instruments for specific learning problems, and poses key questions in program design. The conceptual model shows the phases of college attendance from a student's point of view, as well as the primary roles and potential components of a program serving the student. Part V presents a series of recommendations for those undertaking similar programs, and part VI offers a summary and conclusions. Appendixes contain additional information to help define learning disabilities and alternative instructional strategies. (AJL)

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SUMMARY PROFILE: Programs to Support Learning Disabled Students in Post-Secondary Occupational Education

Two-Year College Development Center
University at Albany, State University of New York
in cooperation with
Bureau of Grants Administration
New York State Education Department

JC 880 413

SUMMARY PROFILE:

PROGRAMS to SUPPORT LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS

in POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

Two-Year College Development Center
University at Albany, State University of New York

in cooperation with

Bureau of Grants Administration
New York State Education Department

Fall 1988

SUMMARY PROFILES OF PROGRAMS FOR LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS

IN POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

The Carl D. Perkins Act has served as a stimulus for two-year colleges to initiate or offer expanded program and service alternatives to better serve the special needs populations--the disadvantaged, disabled, single parents/homemakers, returning adults, criminal offenders and individuals encountering sex bias/stereotyping. Concerns are often expressed by those considering allocation of funds set aside for these special populations regarding successful program strategies, realistic objectives and relationship of needs to program components. In order to respond to these and related concerns, the Two-Year College Development Center, University at Albany, in cooperation with the Bureau of Grants Administration, New York State Education Department, undertook a research project designed to identify two-year college programs that successfully serve one or more of the needs populations and to determine relationships between program components/strategies and the needs of a specific clientele.

To identify programs that serve the special needs populations, a survey was distributed in Phase I to the Chief Academic Officers at 62 State University of New York, City University of New York and independent two-year colleges. The survey was developed to identify local efforts which the respective colleges found worthy of being shared with others. A response rate of 65.5% resulted in 102 efforts for special needs populations. These were compiled into a publication titled, A Compendium of Postsecondary Programs that Serve Special Needs Populations, and distributed statewide.

The 102 entries also served as a database for consideration of programs for indepth study of the relationship of need and strategy. Using selection criteria of frequency, scope, reported effectiveness, and information availability, Single Parents/Homemakers were designated for study in Phase I. These results were compiled into a document entitled Summary Profile: Single Parents/Homemakers in Postsecondary Occupational Education, and similarly distributed statewide.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that: "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance," including schools and colleges. The term handicap in the legislation includes specific learning disabilities such as perceptual handicaps and dyslexia. All higher education institutions and colleges must assure accessibility of programs and activities, provide appropriate auxiliary aids although this may often be done by informing them of resources available, and make reasonable modifications in academic requirements, where necessary, to ensure full educational opportunity such as extension of time for completing degree requirements, and elimination of rules prohibiting tape recorders in class. Thus colleges are legally mandated by this legislation to provide services to students who are learning disabled. The legislation has not only served as an impetus but also as a loose structure for determining appropriate services.

During the second phase, the population of Learning Disabled students was selected for further study. Six sites offering programs were selected as research sites: Onondaga Community College, Erie Community College, Fashion Institute of Technology, Bronx Community College, Elizabeth Seton College and Fulton-Montgomery Community College. Collection of detailed data at each site utilized interviews of program staff (N=27) and clientele (N=28) plus written responses to information sheets. Following staff and clientele interviews at each of the six sites, a descriptive summary was shared with the program coordinator to verify information and to share clientele input.

After appropriate revisions, each program was outlined using a standard format that provided detail regarding number of clients, funding source, staffing, college type, program objectives, functions, components, needs, success evidence plus clientele demographics, needs, recommendations as well as characteristics of successful participants. These outlines were compiled into a project report, Profiles of 1987-88 Programs for Learning Disabled Students.

The purpose of the remainder of this research report is to summarize data that may be useful to others involved in programs for learning disabled students, and to portray the relationship of population needs to program activities based on data collected and their outcomes.

Dr. LaVerna M. Fadale
Project Director

We wish to express our appreciation to the 55 program staff members and participants who so willingly cooperated with our data collection. In particular, we wish to thank the six program coordinators who arranged and coordinated the data collection session at their respective colleges: Myrna Pagan, Bronx Community College; Sandi Galst, Elizabeth Seton College; Kathy Hoffman, Erie Community College; Irene Buchman, Fashion Institute of Technology; Harold Morrell, Fulton-Montgomery Community College; and Deborah Knight, Onondaga Community College. This study was made possible through the cooperation of these individuals and their colleges.

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I. Summary Profile of Clients

The 28 learning disabled students represented a comprehensive range of clients who might be found in two-year college programs across the State. The information collected during interviews included general demographics, reasons for enrolling, major needs and most useful resources.

A. Demographic Profile of Interviewed Clients:

Age Range -

under 20	35.6%
20 - 29	46.4%
30 - 39	10.6%
40 - 49	3.7%
50 and over	3.7%

Gender -

Female - 60.7%
Male - 39.3%

Status -

Single	82.1%
Married	7.2%
Divorced/Separated	7.2%

Student Status -

Full-time	85.7%
Part-time	14.3%

Employment Status -

Part-time	50.0%
Full-time	17.9%
Not employed	32.1%

Program Enrollment -

19.2% General Studies
15.4% Human Services
11.4% Advertising Design, Display
7.8% Business and Accounting; Retail Management and Merchandising; Liberal Arts
3.8% Graphic Arts; Computer Science; Electrical Engineering Technology; TV, Radio; Photography; Patternmaking; Art Illustration; Recreational Leadership

(% applies to each program area)

B. Why Enrolled in College/Learning Disabled Program:

40.8% Better self, improve academic skills and clarify career/education goals

25.9% Program/services provided at college for learning disabled students, program reputation

18.5% Quality of job/profession, further education

14.8% Cost, location

C. Major Needs of Learning Disabled Students:

To achieve self-awareness and self-acceptance of deficiencies

To gain freedom from dependence on others and to become self-reliant

To have access to support systems that help achieve a functional level of academic and socialization skills including --

- organization, time management and study skills such as notetaking, outlining, etc.
- reading and comprehension skills
- writing skills including spelling, handwriting, structure, etc.
- language skills
- math and computation skills
- transferability/application of skills to content areas
- financial coping skills
- personal health care skills
- social perceptions and interpretation of verbal and nonverbal messages

To have access to accommodations that help overcome learning deficiencies, such as technological aids, readers, typists, time extensions, proofreaders, tutoring, etc.

To have access to counseling support, both general and academic

D. Most Used Resources/Activities:

37.9% Support systems for academic skills -

- tutoring
- remedial courses
- learning center/skill labs

27.7% Support system to help overcome learning deficiency -

- typists
- minimal credit load
- taping classes/lectures
- word processing/computer
- accommodative testing -- reading, untimed, special proctors
- notetakers
- readers

24.1% The supportive attitude, understandings, pervasive sense of concern for individual exhibited by professional staff, cooperation and interest of faculty
Awareness of available help/support from individuals and procedures when problems arise, someone to talk to

10.3% Application of skills to content, place to study

II. Summary Profile of Programs

The 27 program staff members provided data and information through interviews, written materials and reports. This resulted in identification of major objectives, funding sources, program functions and their relative importance, program evaluation strategies and valued resources.

A. Major Objectives:

To teach and promote self-advocacy

To encourage independence, awareness of ability to learn, and appropriate social behavior

To increase self-awareness of needs and appropriate accommodations

To provide access to career, employment and education by meeting individual needs

To provide services and support in order that learning disabled students have an opportunity to achieve individual success

To network and articulate with outside agencies and internal staff

To identify previously undesignated students with learning disabilities

B. Program Funding Sources:

100% Partial grant support from Perkins-VEA

Range - approximately $6,000 to $44,000

100% Partial support from college budget

50% Selected support from outside agencies

C. Numbers Served:

Range - 15 - 140 students per year

Total represented by interviewed programs - 340 students

(The total number served in any one program is related to intent and purpose of the program as well as level of program funding. For example, greater numbers can be expected for supplemental services than for a discrete program targeted to a particular segment of the population.)

D. Program Position in College:

50% Report to Chief Student Affairs Administrator

50% Report to Chief Academic Administrator

E. Program Functions:

	College Programs:					
Functions:	A	B	C	D	E	F
Counseling/advising	35%	16%	10%	-	-	5%
Testing/assessment	30%	-	-	-	5%	-
Instruction/tutoring	10%	22%	85%	70%	80%	-
Placement/referral	5%	6%	-	-	5%	5%
Recruitment	5%	6%	-	-	-	35%
Consultation with faculty and staff/ students; liaison/ networking, ombudsman, advocacy; goal-setting, accommodations support	15%	22%	5%	20%	10%	50%
Policies/procedures; administration/ clerical	-	28%	-	10%	-	5%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

F. Rating of Function Importance:

	% of Programs Selecting Function as Most Important
*Tutoring	66.7%
Counseling/advising	33.3%
Diagnosis, assessment of needs	33.3%
Liaison and networking	1.7%
Recruitment	1.7%

(Multiple responses, thus does not equal 100%.)

*Tutoring provided by a Learning Disabled Program is often supplemented by tutors from other campus programs resulting in more comprehensive services.

G. Most Valuable Resource to Program:

- Personnel - counselors, faculty, tutors, administrators
- Materials - computers, books on tape, recorders, publications, etc.
- Remedial courses, skill labs
- Support of outside agenceis
- Interaction with peers
- Location and extent of physical facilities

(in order of frequency)

H. Evidence of Program Success:

- GPA, graduation rate, course passing rates, achievement levels, results of retention studies
- Positive feedback from students
- Numbers of students served
- Receptivity of college community and of agencies making referrals
- Numbers of students who continue education, receive scholarships
- Extent to which students achieve individual goals, become independent learners, help one another

(in order of frequency)

III. Summary of Characteristics of Successful Clients

Both program staff and clients identified the characteristics of individuals who had participated and attained success.

* Individuals who pass courses, graduate with degree/certificate or complete what they enrolled to learn, achieve personal goals

** Individuals who are motivated, hardworking, persistent and have a desire to learn

Individuals who are independent, able to cope and recognize needs, disability and its limitations, and accommodate disability

Individuals who continue to make progress, begin and complete tasks, able to manage time effectively and are well-organized

Individuals who have pride in accomplishments, feel accepted, have a positive attitude, and are able to apply skills learned

Individuals who attain a good job or are counseled to an appropriate agency

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* Selected most frequently by program staff

** Selected most frequently by students/clients

IV. Needs - Program Activities Typology

Background

Today a greater number of students are arriving at New York State two-year college campuses with special learning problems that impede goal attainment. Many are termed learning disabled. Marked by no outwardly visible sign of handicap, these students may be a greater challenge to the ability of postsecondary education to accept and adapt to diversity than any population accommodated thus far. Colleges are developing or adapting a variety of procedures and services for these students that include admissions criteria, assessment procedures, evaluation of student performance, academic support systems, instructional methods, individual and group psychological assistance, peer support, and career counseling.

The National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities (1981) designates learning disabilities as a generic term referring to a heterogeneous group of disorders intrinsic to the individual, and manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. Specifically, learning disabled students face problems in study skills such as listening, note taking, and scanning; in processing and critical thinking such as inability to employ problem-solving strategies, organize information, or deal with abstractions, questions, or the evaluation of information; in language characterized by difficulties with oral and written language such as dealing with symbols; applying grammar and vocabulary instruction, monitoring writing errors; and reading including word analysis, comprehension and rate. Often earlier difficulties with fine motor coordination may leave the college learning disabled student with illegible handwriting, and their papers reflect the laborious nature of the writing task. Others may have difficulty understanding language that is heard.

To address the problems faced by the learning disabled population,

Heath Resource Center (1988) has specified that preferred programs by this clientele teach, among others, how to:

- make appropriate choices;
- develop a reasonable plan and follow through on it;
- improve ability to concentrate on instructions and complete assigned tasks;
- develop and demonstrate positive self-concept;
- develop planning and goal setting strategies, which will develop foresight and judgment;
- reflect on personal strengths and weaknesses;
- express needs to appropriate persons, as a self advocate;
- decide to ask for help in any of the above.*

Definition

Decisions regarding program structure should relate to the operational definition of learning disabled at the particular college (see Appendix A). There is no universal definition but programs have generally defined learning disabled clientele in one or more of the following modes:

- A permanent but often invisible difficult-to-diagnose disorder that prevents individuals of normal/above-average intelligence from receiving, organizing or expressing information in a conventional manner. Word analysis, reading comprehension, spelling, written expression, mathematical computation, processing and problem solving are common areas of deficiencies for learning disabled college students/adults.
- Deficient academic skill development that requires more extensive attention than can be provided in regular remedial courses; often found in conjunction with a display of creative, technical or artistic talent.
- Significant discrepancy between estimated learning potential and actual performance.

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*Young Adults with Learning Disabilities and Other Special Needs: Guide for Selecting Postsecondary Transition Programs. Washington, D.C.: Heath Resource Center, 1988.

In one attempt to clarify and identify the kinds of difficulties experienced by learning disabled students, particularly for programs that incorporate assessment, the following breakdown of learning disabled subtypes was summarized by one program coordinator. This was based on clinical observation of 100 learning disabled and head injured students enrolled in a college Learning Disabled Program.

Learning Disabilities Subtypes:

Characteristic	Major Difficulty	Assessment Tools
Reading language	- Decoding words - Disorders in auditory sequencing and phonological recoding - Comprehension and reasoning	- Decoding inventories - Lindamood auditory conceptualization - Reading comprehension tests - Cognitive battery-- WAIS-R, Woodcock-Johnson - Informal reading inventories - Reasoning and processing patterns on cognitive ability tests
Receptive language	- Understanding language when listening or reading -- making inferences, recognizing similarities of meaning but different structure, vocabulary	- Test of Adolescent Language - Test of Language Competence - Clinical Evaluation of Language Functions - Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
Expressive language	- Expressing self in speech and writing due to word finding deficiencies	- Test of Adolescent Language - Test of Language Competence - Clinical Evaluation of Language Functions
Written language	- Writing and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, organization, development, word choice, and/or sense of audience	- Writing samples - Spelling tests

Characteristic	Major Difficulty	Assessment Tools
Visual-spatial perception	- Perceiving shapes, understanding numerical relationships, deficiencies in math/fractions	- Block Design (WAIS-R) - Perceptual Speed Test (Woodcock-Johnson) - Math achievement
Reasoning deficits	- Perservation, inflexible thinking, problems with logic/algebra	- Standard Progressive Matrices - Reasoning subtests (WAIS-R or Woodcock-Johnson) - Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-2 - Test of Cognitive Skills
Memory deficits	- Memory problems often due to inefficient learning strategies or other language problems	- Diagnosis by professional external to college/program - Indicator due to frequency exhibited by head injured students

(Deborah Knight, Coordinator, Learning Disabilities Assistance Program, Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, New York)

Program Design

When preparing to serve learning disabled students, two-year colleges have choices to make in the structure and design of the program. The term learning disability does not necessarily translate into a single deficiency but represents a range of problems as a group, and often more than one difficulty for an individual. Recognizing the diverse needs of learning disabled students as a group and individually should provide the basis for decision-making regarding the program. Some basic program design questions are:

- What legal issues are involved in serving this population?
- Will diagnoses be made at college as part of the program, or will the results of previous assessments be accepted?
- Will there be an effort to identify previously undiagnosed learning disabled students, particularly the older returning student?
- Will the effort emphasize instruction or support services?
- To what extent are appropriate support services and linkages already in place?
- To what extent will coordination of existing services and resources address the needs of learning disabled?
- Will the effort be targeted to a particular segment of the learning disabled population?
- To what extent can or should the population to be served be selected or screened for admission?
- How will staffing/personnel be affected?
- To what extent are funding and other needed resources available?
- At what point in time will the effort begin (arrival on campus, while in secondary school, etc.)?
- Where will the program be located, e.g., student services, counseling, skill center, etc.?

The question of program start is crucial to identification, planning and implementation. If the program begins with student arrival on campus, structure and personnel needs differ substantially from an effort that begins with transitioning or chooses to undertake a formal assessment before admission to the college program. Identification of learning disabled students can be undertaken in various ways (which are linked to program structure) including:

- Screening or diagnostic evaluation of suspected learning disabilities by college program staff through testing, interviews and assessment

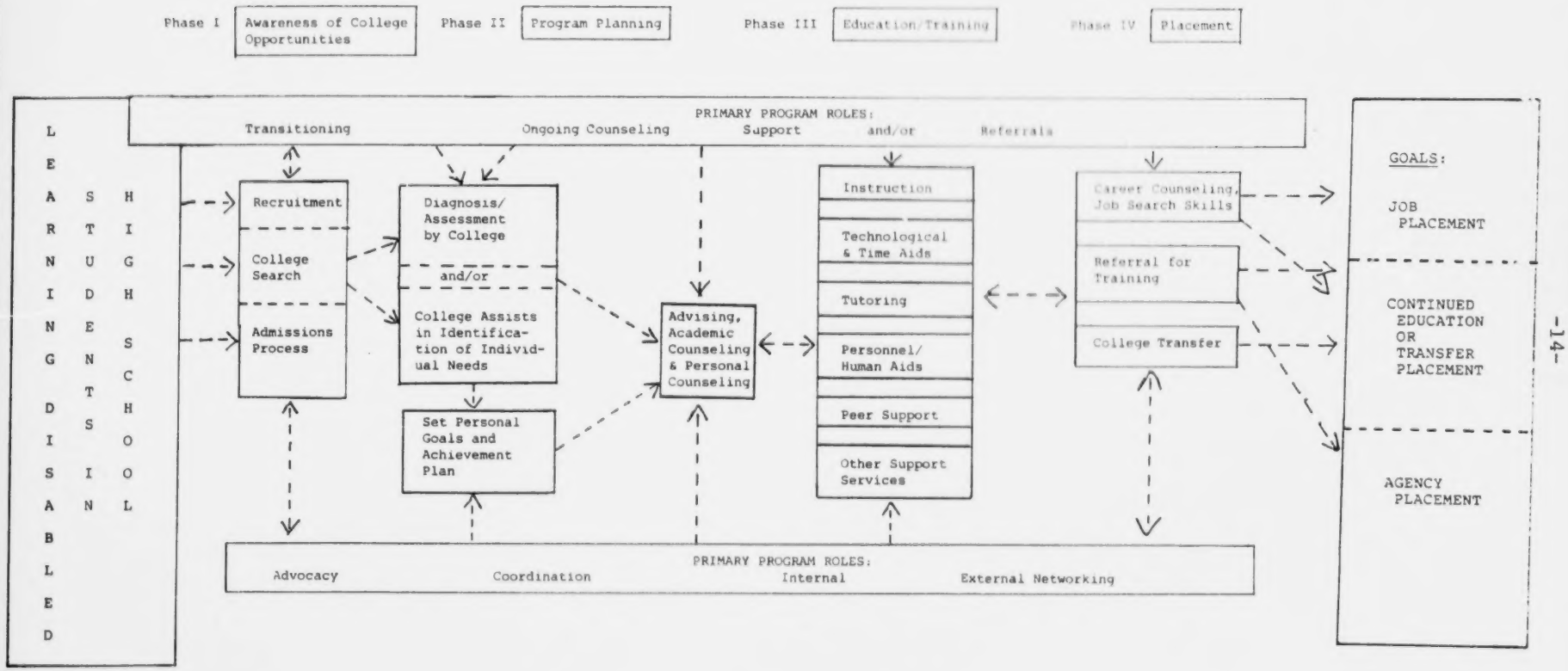
- Review of diagnoses at secondary/BOCES and/or elementary levels
- Identification by outside agencies such as OVR, Commission for the Blind, Association for Learning Disabled
- Referrals by faculty, counselors, remedial teachers, admission personnel, other college staff members
- Self-referral
- Intake meetings/interview sessions
- Evaluation of cognitive, academic, language skills

A Conceptual Model

The following model was designed to outline the range of program components that can be incorporated to address the needs of learning disabled students. The learning disabled student completing high school has four phases to work through toward achievement of one or more of the goals of career, further education or alternate placement: 1) awareness of the college opportunity, 2) planning to set personal goals and how best to achieve them, 3) education/training to gain appropriate skills and knowledge, and 4) placement in a job or transfer for further education or other agency support. As shown in the model, the programs for learning disabled students have a range of components to address the needs within each phase. Some program elements are ongoing such as counseling and advocacy which are needed throughout the college experience and are basic to all activities and services. Others are periodic as appropriate to individual needs and the education sequence.

PROGRAM MODEL FOR LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS

IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGE PROGRAMS



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The model is an attempt to show the general college phases from a student's point of view as well as the primary program roles and potential components of a program serving the student.

Students considering college experience an awareness phase when someone from the college contacts them while they are still in high school and works with them to ease the transition into college. Or the college may recruit a student in other ways. The planning phase can begin while the student is in high school or wait until admission but sooner or later individual needs and personal goals are identified and a collegiate plan is decided upon as an outcome of counseling and advisement sessions.

As the student pursues a collegiate program, a number of accommodations, aids and services may be made available. These include tutoring, flexible time adjustments, recorders, taped textbooks, use of word processing equipment, alternate assignments and testing procedures, course substitutions or waivers, use of a calculator and note-takers.

As the student nears goal or program completion, counseling focuses more on careers, job search, baccalaureate program selection or continued training in another setting.

Throughout the phases, there are primary program roles. These are ongoing counseling and support, advocacy and coordination of resources both in and outside of college on behalf of the student. The primary roles are the constants which all students need and depend on as they learn their personal coping strategies. It is from these constants that the individualized components grow and vary for each student.

Thus an actual program for a learning disabled student is determined by the respective disability and by the available services or program components at the college. In the following typology, activities that have proven workable and successful by two-year college programs are linked to identified needs of learning disabled students in two-year colleges.

A. Primary Program Roles: Support/Advocacy

Needs:

To have access to ongoing support and advocacy

To develop a sense of self-advocacy

To have an opportunity for diagnosis/assessment

To be referred to appropriate agency(ies) for support

Program Options:

Counseling & Advising

- Coordinate related services; recognize and address individual problems
- Advise the scheduling of classes, choice of courses, and selection of instructors
- Provide personal, academic and career counseling
- Provide group counseling and/or peer support group opportunities

Advocacy

- Provide training/education for learning disabled students who frequently do not understand learning disabilities generally, or their own specifically or Section 504.
- Provide inservice for faculty/staff to make faculty aware of program areas and needs using one-to-one contact and/or workshops; provide information about learning disabilities and appropriate educational strategies for assisting learning disabled students to faculty, staff, and tutors

  Faculty/staff should have an opportunity for professional development in:

  - Awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of students with learning disabilities.
  - Classroom strategies for working with students with learning disabilities. (See Appendix B.)
  - Prerequisite courses and skills which students with learning disabilities need to enroll in a college program.

- Periodic meetings and consultations with faculty
- Follow-up to assure that designated accommodations are provided and assist students and faculty in implementation of accommodations

- Maintain linkages with community agencies/organizations for support and services for student, and secondary level staff; serve as ombudsman
- Cooperate in determining additional campus needs
- Seek funding and alternatives to expand or upgrade services
- Participate in professional development activities for self-improvement and for awareness and understanding of others
- Presentations on the elarning disabled college student for other schools and agencies

B. Awareness and Planning Phases

Needs:

To be aware of available support programs/services at college

To receive information and support to facilitate transition into two-year college

To identify individual needs

To develop a personal individualized plan including goals, courses, accommodations needed

To be referred to an appropriate agency if not previously identified

Program Options:

- Establish a working relationship between admission and special student services personnel
- Arrange campus visitations by high school students
- Interview students and parents
- Review transcripts and other appropriate records, etc.
- Provide assistance with admissions procedures
- Provide transitioning support: for example, set goals, plan for needs, curriculum, accommodations and support
- Seek family involvement with decision-making, goal-setting and support
- Hold orientation session with family regarding college options, support services, financial assistance, programs available, necessary skills for success, various legal entitlements under 94-142 versus 504
- Select and develop plan for options to assist students - remedial, developmental or accommodation program
- Orient students to facility and scheduling

- Develop a plan for sharing appropriate instructional materials with secondary level
- Establish linkages with faculty chairpersons to ensure that appropriate modifications/accommodations are made for students
- Make appropriate referrals to services at Office of Vocational Rehabilitation or programs at Association of Learning Disabled or to outside professionals for students needing more intensive, specific, or long-term treatment
- Provide academic advisement to students

C. Instruction Phase

Needs:

To achieve success in courses of selected career program

To learn to accept, successfully cope with and accommodate deficiency

To achieve competence with academic, social and management skills

Program Options:

Instruction & Tutoring

- Remedial classes, labs, skill centers, workshops for writing, reading, spelling, and study skills
- Direct training in use of accommodations and in adapting study skills to meet individual needs; for example, a reading assignment prior to lecture compared to listening and then read
- Provide training, supervision and follow-up to tutors in skill (reading, spelling, writing, and math) and content areas
- Peer tutoring
- Group tutoring
- Study groups
- Access to academic counseling

Accommodations Availability

- Notetakers
- Readers
- Typists
- Alternate testing - oral, untimed
- Access to word processor/computer
- Scribe
- Alternate test locations

- Time extensions - testing
- Reduced course load
- Taped textbooks
- Talking/recorded books
- Course substitutions/waivers
- Calculators
- Tape recorders
- Tape-recorded classes
- Alternate class participation, such as not being asked to read aloud in class
- Other technological aids as appropriate/available

D. Placement Phase

Needs:

To acquire a job that provides a living income

To transfer or continue education beyond the two-year college level

To become self-sufficient and independent

Program Options:

- In conjunction with college placement services, determine employment possibilities in area to help with advisement including investigation of the feasibility of using accommodations in a work setting
- Assist students in finding jobs in related career areas; help with resumes, interview skills, job-search techniques, etc.
- Assist students in selection of colleges for transfer - application process; make arrangements for interviews, testing, etc.

V. Program and Staff Recommendations

A. Recommendations to Others Undertaking A Similar Program:

1. Allow adequate time for building trust with staff, and present a clear set of goals and intent.

2. Plan to spend time in becoming professionally and personally competent, aware of field, legal implications, needs, possible strategies, etc.

3. Establish rapport with faculty/staff in Counseling Services, Admissions, Developmental Studies, Remedial Labs, Registrar's Office, Bookstore, etc.

4. Treat each individual case in a unique special manner and do not generalize.

5. Be aware that some students do not want to be identified as learning disabled or be public with a disability. Section 504 requires services for self-identified students; state clearly college's policy who is eligible for services. Those who choose not to self-identify are ineligible. Identification to a faculty member or any other staff other than the designated Learning Disabled/Disabled Student Services staff does not necessarily constitute official identification.

6. Seek highly qualified tutors (professional may be preferred in some situations) and help provide understandings of LD student needs and interaction.

7. Establish academic counseling as central to the program; good advising and course selections with special care to the right instructors (some need to be avoided and the students should be aware of that).

8. Physically locate an assistance program for learning disabled with other support services for special needs so that sharing of resources is facilitated.

9. Obtain a commitment to spend money and time for a few students; but plan for growth.

10. Consider groups such as a rap group for a mutual support system among learning disabled students, however encourage them not to segregate themselves, but to interact with other students -- disabled and able-bodied.

11. Be aware that learning disabled students should not be separated but only make provision for services and support as students generally need services.

12. Be aware that learning disabled students take more staff time than students with other disabilities.

13. Personnel, diagnosis, equipment, accommodations are important but a single program may emphasize one or more over the others.

14. Be aware that only now are employment needs of this population being recognized, which has a 50% unemployment rate.

B. Continuing Ongoing Program Needs/Problems:

1. Need for more staff including tutors, administrators, counselors, diagnosticians, etc.

2. Need for more technological aids such as computers, word processors, etc.

3. Better understanding of learning disabled students by faculty resulting in more support and awareness

4. Increased articulation among related services within college

5. More effective admissions screening

6. More space and facilities

7. Financial support from institution

C. Recommended Qualifications for Program Staff:

- Professional counselors who possess a helping relationship perspective

- Individuals who are skilled in teaching academic skills, use of technological aids and/or psychoeducational testing

- A staff member with diagnostic skills and strategies to deliver accommodations

- The minimum of a master's degree in a related field

- Experience and capability as an administrator

- A willingness to do the little extra

D. Program Recommendations from Clients:

- More full-time counselors, staff and tutors to provide more assistance and availability to students

- Child care availability

- Greater accessibility to word processing/computers, technological aids

- A strategy to insure that students have access to a wide breadth of experience and awareness of the real working world

- Opportunities for help between semesters, summer

- More space, an office where individual and group activities do not conflict

- A tutoring center where tutors are prepared at scheduled times and are available in content areas such as accounting and electricity

- Perhaps the availability of pre-tests on discs in the learning center would provide practice for students without the teacher's presence and serve as another learning tool

VI. Summary and Conclusions

Programs for learning disabled students are not a set of specific, sequential instructional programs in the usual sense of program, but are more apt to be a set of specialized support services organized to provide tools for coping with individual deficiencies and capitalizing on individual strengths within a college setting. Programs are similar in that ongoing counseling and advocacy are major priorities in their supportive role to the academic and vocational instructional activities. As a result, learning disabled students learn to accept and cope with their deficiencies, to be their own advocates and to achieve a sense of success regarding educational and/or career options.

- The needs of learning disabled students can be addressed in four phases: awareness, planning, education/training and placement. Similarly, these four phases provide a general structure for programming.
- Program design for learning disabled students involves resolution of several questions regarding program emphasis, timing, resources and local student needs.
- The four phases move from completion of secondary education to achieving the goals of career, continued education or other placement.
- The phases are interrelated. Since clients may enter college with diverse needs, programs should be flexible and reflect individual needs.
- The numbers served by any one program are related to local clientele needs/demand, major focus, and available resources/ funding.
- Learning disabled programs should have offices or a suite that help network with counselors and/or service-providers to

other special needs groups.

- Recruitment and/or admissions for these programs can be open to whomever comes or in some cases, can be somewhat selective by choosing to focus services while concurrently attempting to help all in any way possible.
- Programs may center on planning, evaluating, etc. prior to college entrance; others may focus on support after admissions.
- Learning disabled programs are supplemental since their purpose is to provide the extra help needed to successfully complete a regular career program.
- Program components usually include counseling (personal, self-awareness, career), advising regarding class schedules/ faculty preferences, modifications (time, instruction, etc.)/ accommodations (word processing, tape recorder, etc.), tutoring, remedial classes/labs, opportunities for peer support groups and advocacy or ombudsmanship.
- Tutoring, counseling/advising and needs assessment are generally viewed as program priorities even though delivery varies in accordance with program emphasis.
- In some instances, activities are part of a larger more comprehensive effort coordinated to serve multiple special needs populations.
- The programs for learning disabled may be linked organizationally to student affairs or academics. These programs are usually funded partially from grant funds and partially from college budgets.

- The abilities and perspectives of staff members are crucial to program success; thus personnel should be carefully selected since staff competency and dedication are the most important program resources.
- Although there is no universally accepted definition for learning disabled students, two-year college programs operationally define their clientele in terms of diagnoses, academic skill competency or discrepancies between potential and performance.
- Learning disabled students view peers who are motivated, hardworking and persistent as successful. Program staff view clients who pass courses, graduate or reach their personal educational goals as successful.

APPENDIX A

Defining Learning Disabled

Three steps are involved in all human learning: input of information, process of information and output. For a learning disabled student, there is a breakdown at one, two or all three of these steps.

At the input stage:

- very limited information may be taken in at one time.
- there may be a high level of distractability or short attention span resulting in lost and/or inaccurate information.
- one or more of the five senses or modalities of learning may be impaired in the ability to receive information.
- there may be difficulties receiving information from more than one modality or sense, at any one time.

In the process stage:

- it may be difficult to organize or put information in order, causing this information to be confused or jumbled.
- there may be difficulty integrating old knowledge with new learning.
- short or long-term memory may be limited so that information is forgotten.
- it may be difficult to transfer or associate information learned visually with that learned auditorally or vice a versa.
- there may be difficulty in language encoding and decoding.

In the output stage:

- there may be difficulty expressing in written form, knowledge that is understood or known verbally.
- there may be difficulty in performing tasks even though the knowledge is present.
- there may be difficulty expressing knowledge verbally that can then be applied.

(Learning Together: A Handbook for Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities, L. J. Love, ERIC, ED 263 3289.)

APPENDIX B

Alternative Instructional Strategies

Instructors can develop/incorporate alternative instructional strategies and techniques that help students with learning disabilities accommodate weaknesses and problems. These generalized strategies can help all students in a class, including those with certain learning disabilities:

- Provide students with a detailed course syllabus, preferably prior to the course.
- Clearly spell out expectations before the course begins (e.g., grading criteria, material to be covered, project deadlines).
- Start each lecture with an outline of material to be covered during that period. At the conclusion of class, briefly summarize key points.
- Speak directly to students, and use gestures and natural expressions to convey further meaning.
- Write new or technical vocabulary on the blackboard, or use a student handout. Terms should be used in context to convey greater meaning.
- Give assignments both orally and in written form to avoid confusion.
- Announce reading assignments well in advance.
- Allow students to tape lectures as a substitute for notetaking.
- For examinations, provide study questions that demonstrate the format as well as the content.
- If necessary, allow students with learning disabilities alternate opportunities to demonstrate mastery of course material (e.g., give tests with extended time limits; oral, taped, or individually supervised examinations in a separate room).
- Permit the use of simple calculators, scratch paper, and spellers' dictionaries during examinations.
- Provide adequate opportunities for question-and-answer sessions and review sessions.
- If possible, select textbooks with accompanying study guides for student use.
- Vary the ways to give directions
    - oral, direct from instructor or recorded on tape
    - written on paper, blackboard or overhead projector
    - demonstrate what is being done.
- Ask for periodic status reports of long-term assignments.
- Teach students to use textbook sections: glossary, index, table of contents, introductions, summaries and graphics.

- Provide and teach memory tricks (mnemonics).
- Teach the student to proofread assignments and tests.
- Teach and encourage the student to use all learning modalities (visual, auditory and motor-notetaking from lectures).
- Encourage students to use campus support services (e.g., pre-registration, assistance in ordering taped textbooks, alternative testing arrangements, specialized study aids, peer support groups, diagnostic consultation, development training, academic tutorial assistance).
- Be aware and revise what is and is not working.

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